

## [Nueva Esperanza Plantation]

25989 [????] [??]

Sunday - July 30, 1939

Mrs. Isabel Barnwell, Neuva Esperanza

(Sp. New Hope) Plantation,

Florida 13, Yulee

to Fernandin, 6 m.

Rose Shepherd, Writer. A DAY AT NUEVA [ESPERANZA?], (Sp. NEW HOPE) PLANTATION

Accompanying Mrs. Barnwell and her daughter on a Sunday visit to Nueva Esperanza (Sp. New Hope) Plantation, a Spanish Grant given to her great-grandmother, Margaret o'Neill, in 1792, was like glimpsing life of a hundred years ago, as Mrs. Barnwell related instances and recalled historic happenings handed down through family lineage.

We left Jacksonville at 11 a.m. in a pouring rain, traveling north on U. S. 17 to Yulee, then right on Florida 13 to Zetterow's filling station 3 miles west of Fernandina, where we stopped for milk, bottled drinks and sandwiches. We had covered the distance in an hour by automobile, and as we had traveled away from the rainclouds, this section was outside the local thundershower, but the air was cool and pleasant, tempered by the breezes from the Atlantic Ocean, two miles eastward.

## Library of Congress

That's all my land across the road, said Mrs. Barnwell. "That dirt road was put through my place by the road department of Nassau County about six years ago. It extends for three miles right through the center of the old plantation.

"By the way, this Zetterow family is the fourth generation of their name in Nassau County. They used to own fourteen hundred acres over here to the right, but they have sold most of it. It was wonderfully rich land, and belonged 2 originally to a Mrs, Starratt, The Goffin family now own a considerable section which runs to the Amelia River, giving them large beds of oysters. At one time they did quite a considerable business of canning oysters commercially, in addition to disposing of quantities of fresh oysters commercially.

"I used to teach this boy, Oscar Zetterow's father, who one day brought his little sister, Irene, to school for the day. Irene was about five years old. Some of the children had found a nest with two young birds in it, blown down from a tree in a storm. My son, Woodward Barnwell, who was a second-grader at the time, brought in a little shrub, placing the birds on a small branch. The birds got excited from so many children chattering around them, and one, gathering strength as it warmed up in the sun from the east window, began to hop around on the floor, then suddenly raising its wings flew out the open window. Little Irene ran to Woodward and cried excitedly, 'One little bird flied out the the window. Did you see it flew?'

"Oscar and his wife, Orlo, run the filling station here, and they have a small store in the back with supplies of staple groceries. As it is open day and night, they relieve each other at the work. I see Oscar is on duty now, so I guess Orlo is still asleep, having been up most of the night."

"Oscar, how about some ice?" asked Mrs. Barnwell. "I have a long Georgia watermelon in the car here, and must have some ice to cool it."

## Library of Congress

Oscar brought out a 20-lb piece of ice, well wrapped in heavy paper, and placed it in the car, with the cold drinks and milk with some canned meats and a loaf of bread to make sandwiches when we arrived at our destination.

"Turn left here," Mrs. Barnwell instructed the chauffeur, Dallas, "and keep right on this county road until we get to the Avenue."

"The Avenue," Mrs. Barnwell explained, "is about a mile farther on, and turns west, flanked on either side by immense old liveoak trees, leading to the yard gate of the old plantation manor house.

"You want to know how we rate this nice road? Well, you see it was always just a country lane, sometimes with trees blown across by storms, and about seven years ago I wrote the State Road Department, calling their attention to the length of time our family, the o'Neills, have been living here - over a hundred and fifty years - paying taxes and doing our part towards the upkeep of the county, and asked about their building a road through the place, as it was a kind of county highway. It was not long before they sent a survey party out, and the result was this nice dirt road three miles long and thirty feet wide through our property.

"Look at the cattle! Every year I fatten free about two hundred head of cows and calves belonging to neighbors that range free over my land. There used to be fences, but they are all gone now, and there is no way of keeping them in bounds.

"The original grant to my great-grandmother comprised 1,073 acres, given to her for distinguished services rendered by my great-grandfather, Henry o'Neill, to the Spanish Crown when Florida and a large part of Georgia was under Spanish dominion. The seat of government for this section was at what is now St. Mary's, Georgia, a few miles north of Fernandina. My great-grandfather was killed by a Spanish outlaw, and for this his widow was given this / immense grant of land, a captain's pension, and also a Chart of Montepio - Sp. Mountain of Peace, a kind of special award signed by the King of Spain. Of this latter,

## Library of Congress

I just learned three years ago, through an interested friend who went to Havana and found the record of the grant, the pension and the award in the Spanish Archives in that city.

“After Henry o'Neill died, his widow, Margaret, married William Hollingsworth, of Saint Marys. They had two daughters, Eliza and Mary.

“Eliza Hollingsworth married a Mr. Baird, and Mary married Levan Gunby, an Englishman. My mother was a daughter of Mary and Levan Gunby.

“In an old deed I was looking over three years ago, I discovered that my mother's grandfather, William Hollingsworth, was given a memorial in Duval County, because during the Revelotinary War he had with his troops won a battle at ‘Camp New Hope’ - named for our New Hope Plantation. The spot bears a marker also with this information.”

As she talked we were driven through the rich soil of the old four / hundred-acre cornfield, now grown up in shrubs and young pine trees.

“The court divided the land among the heirs years ago,” said Mrs. Barnwell,” giving each 174 acres. This lot on the right was my sister, Florence's share. ,She died many years 5 ago, and her children now live in New York.

“The land to the left of the road belongs to my brother, Dunbar, who lives in California.

“Through some litigation, I heard my father say, one hundred and eighty acres went to outsiders.

“My parcel is a little more than the other heirs, as my husband and I bought out some of the others' share, and I have one parcel of 100 acres, one of one / hundred and seventy-four acres where the old homestead is, and another small lot of thirty-five acres, a little more than three hundred acres, all told.

## Library of Congress

"Where the land is cleared on the left is a section belonging to my son, o'Neill Barnwell, two hundred and ninety acres, goes down here about two miles west to Lanceford Creek, or as it is now known - Clark's River - and east to the Amelia River.

"My land is all being turpentine, under contract to Powell and Shave. Mr. Powell lives in Jacksonville, and Mr. Shave, in Fernandina. They pay ten cents a tree, which brings in around five hundred dollars per year. In six or seven years, the turpentine will be exhausted, and I'll have the trees back, either all dead or fit only for pulp-wood.

"Right along here to the left was the big four hundred acre cornfield, as I remember it when a young girl, and to the right, after the war, was the vegetable section, where they raised carrots, cabbages, beets, potatoes, peas, and other 6 garden truck, which was grown in such quantities that the field hands used to gather it, cart it to the dock on Lanceford Creek, and load it on barges, from where it was loaded direct into freighters and shipped to the New York markets.

"Later on it was planted in immense vineyards of Niagara grapes, which did very well at the beginning, but finally died out, as that species of grape requires lots of water, and this is, for some reason, a particularly dry section.

"Well, here we are at the Avenue. It's only about half a mile through this shady grove of big liveoaks to the house. We have been traveling north on the county road, now we are going due west on the avenue.

"Here is the 'arch' - "we passed under the arching limbs of two large liveoaks, one on either side of the drive.

"In that big grove over there to the right was our family schoolhouse, where we were taught by a [tutor?] until we were sufficiently educated to go off to college.

## Library of Congress

"There - at the end of the Avenue is Lanceford Creek, or Clark's River, as they call it now. Smell the salt water? The tide is out, and you can get a good view of the 'oyster Tree' - a liveoak almost in the river as the land has eroded away. See the oysters clinging to the roots and the branches that are in the water at flood tide?"

The Chauffeur stopped the car and got out to open the gate to the yard fence around the house, to keep the cattle 7 out.

"You can park right under the old cedar tree, where we'll have our lunch, said Mrs. Barnwell, as he brought the car up under an ago-old scraggly cedar, the main trunk towering up for thirty feet.

We alighted after an hour's ride from Jacksonville over almost the identical route that used to require two and a half hours in a light buggy drawn by a fast-stepping horse.

The three-story house built in 1882 from lumber used in the contruction of the original house, created by Mrs. Barnwell's father, Henry o'Neil, when he brought his bride to this spot in 1832, loomed stark and desolate. Minus paint, the hand-hewn weatherboarding, the open porches running the full length of the house on the south and west sides, with the upper galleries the same length. the huge windows with red-painted shutters from floor to ceiling, indicated a grandeur gone with the past century. The handsome hand-carved black walnut doors - front, back, and in the partitions of opening rooms - alone retained the hand polished luster of one hundred and seven years.

The house faces west, on a point marking a wide turn in the Clark River to the north. Between boxed hedgerows wide, weatherbeaten steps lead up to the piazza, with hand - wrought furniture, - arm chairs and setters of oak and palmetto strips, shaved with an adze and fashioned into comfortable resting places by hands of former stalwart men of the family, now passed to their reward.

## Library of Congress

We followed with more or less reverence, as Mrs. Barnwell, now 85, led the way down the side porch to the south entrance to the house where she was born in 1854, where she and her three sisters and four brothers led happy, carefree lives in the [glamorous?] days before the War between the States. Waving her cane - she is recovering from a broken right ankle suffered six months ago from slipping on the stairways / in the Jacksonville home of her lifelong friend, Mrs. Arthur T. Williams - she said: "Down through that avenue of trees along the north bank of the cove was the double row of cabins occupied by the hundred slaves owned by my father. The buildings are all gone, but some of the old brick fireplaces and chimneys of the cabins remain. There were twenty in all, and they extended south for a half mile, as each cabin had its garden spot, its pig-pen and chicken house. You can still see traces of the road between the cabins.

"My father and mother planted those four magnolia trees in the south yard between here and the fence, and also the big bay tree, when they came to live here in 1832. One of the lovely old trees has died - there is the stump. We had a tree surgeon work on it, but it was too far gone. The big one over there - the last in the row - is twelve feet in circumference, six feet in diameter, with a spread of ninety foot. I believe it is the largest magnolia anywhere around.

"One time an insurance man came out here to look over the buildings, and said he would rather insure that tree, as he believed it was a better risk than the house."

9

"About fifteen hundred yards northeast of the house is the old cemetery where my mother and father, two infants, and one or two other members of the family are buried. There are no headstones to indicate which is which. A strong wooden fence - pailings painted white each year - has long ago been torn down by wandering cattle, and I had the plot enclosed with a coping of concrete, but I know it is all overgrown with brambles and shrubs, and now we would have a hard time finding it."

## Library of Congress

At the sound of our voices, a middle-aged woman came out of the front door, and was introduced as - Mrs. Toomer."

"You see, Mr. and Mrs. Toomer came through Jacksonville and having been informed by friends that Neuva Esperanza was not occupied, asked if they might come over for the summer and make a few repairs, as everything is in such a dilapidated condition. I gave permission for them to occupy the place - it is delightful here in the summertime. Mr. Toomer is a musician, and we thought maybe he could get some of my songs - old plantation work-songs, spirituals, and negro melodies - that used to be sung on the place, in shape for publishing. They have a boarder, a carpenter, and he is to fix the fence, and do other work to help pay for his [?] board and lodging."

Mrs. Toomer acknowledged the introduction, and on being asked where her husband was, launched into a detailed description of a near tragedy - the caving in of the old dock, which gave way when a truckload of their friends from Jacksonville, including the mother, father, two young girls and a friend, were crabbing ten days ago.

10

Mr. Toomer, observing that in their excitement they were all gathering in one spot, yelled frantically from his position near the old well, fifteen feet away, for some of them to get back on land quickly. His warning came too late and as he ran at the first cracking of the rotten timbers, he got on the falling dock just as it went down with the other five and his wife, and was pinned under a fallen log which lay across both ankles.

The mother and father and Mrs. Toomer extricated themselves, the two young girls fainted and fell to the beach, and Mr. Toomer was unable to move.

The two girls each had suffered sprained ankles, and being unable to walk, were carried to the truck, along with Mr. Toomer, and the father took them to a physician in Fernandina as quickly as possible.

## Library of Congress

The girls' injuries turned out to be bad sprains, but Mr. Toomer suffered a broken right ankle, and was returned to the plantation by his friends, who went back to Jacksonville. He faces six weeks of invalidism, which he says is very trying, as he had planned to do so much to help restore the old place and the outlying buildings.

The Toomers, from their own conversation, are victims of wanderlust. They tell of motor trips through California and other western states, with their [possessions?] in a Ford car, their arriving in Florida last winter, and their plan to stay at New Hope this summer, where they get rent free and are able to subsist almost entirely on fish, oysters, and seafood brought in by the tide in Clark River, a hundred yards 11 away, under the high curving bluff.

"Isn't that just my luck! I am so sorry - I wouldn't have had this accident happen for the world, and I do hope Mr. Toomer does not suffer too much. If it is possible, [I'll?] carry him back with me to Jacksonville, where he can have the benefit of a doctor's care and advice."

"Our friends are coming back day after tomorrow in the truck, and if he is still in so much pain, they will remove him to Jacksonville and he can stay there until he is able to walk."

We all went in to see Mr. Toomer, who was propped up in bed in the northwest room, with the salt breeze coming in through the [sashless?] windows, reading some old detective magazines, left by a former tenant.

The Toomers seem refined people, anxious to do what they can to help Mrs. Barnwell. They were both cleanly, but plainly dressed, the bedding was clean, and the bare floors had been scrubbed.

"Vandals have removed most of the furniture," said Mrs. Barnwell. "This bed Mr. Toomer is lying on, was built by my son, Archibald, of California. He was so tall - six feet, four inches - that we did not have a bed that was comfortable, so he made this one out of fat pine, and

## Library of Congress

painted it cherry red. He is coming in a week or so with his family and will stay here for a month or so. He is an architect and painter, and plans to make some oil sketches of the beauty spots of the old place.

12

"Yes, the stoves have all been removed but one - a heater, and I suppose, Mrs. Toomer, you have to cook on that when it rains?"

"Yes, we make a fire in the yard when it is clear, and boil our vegetables and fry the fish, but the heater is the only thing we have to cook on, in the house," she laughed. "There is an oil stove, but it is so gummed up, I do not know whether we shall be able to get it to work."

The wide hall went through the house from North to south, a drawing room, with mouldings and carved walnut round top doors closing an arch in the hall, a brilliant white marble fireplace and mantel-piece - a bed in the center on which the boarder, Mr. Whitfield, was enjoying an afternoon siesta. Another room adjoining it in the back was where Mr. Toomer had taken up his abode, on the opposite side was the former dining room, now used as a kitchen, and to the southeast what had been years ago, a high ceiled, fancy plastered parlor, the tall windows from floor to ceiling, the red hand-made shutters, swinging back and forth. the entire north side of this room was taken up by an elegant old fashioned rosewood piano. Mr. Toomer, before his accident, had started repairing it. The felts had been removed, and only a few keys would play, but even so, they gave out wonderful harplike tones. It has six octaves, with six notes over, beginning with "C" and ending in the treble with an "A". Middle a "C" is two-thirds down the keyboard instead of in the center, and the lock is not at middle "C" but twelve keys beyond it.

13

Mrs. Barnwell limped into the bare room, and ran her hands carressingly over the old piano. "This was given me by my father in 1869, when I was only fifteen years old. I was very fond of music, and as the Federals had stolen our grand piano when we had to leave

## Library of Congress

so hurriedly when the twenty-one gunboats arrived in Fernandina harbor in 1861, we were unable to have any music after we returned from our enforced four years' stay on a plantation near White Springs for the duration of the War between the States.

"The designer was William White, of New York City. You will see the name on the silver plate here," she said. But vandals had removed this silver name plate of the manufacturer, and only two gaping screw holes in the base remained to show where the identification mark had been.

"Mr. White was most artistic - the scroll around the top and three sides, marks it as of the Chippendale era. He traveled through Germany, England, France and Italy, and incorporated the best in his style of ornate case. The piano is known as an oblong grand.

"The instrument belonged originally to an old gentleman, a Rev. Archibald Baker, of Fernandina, who had two daughters, for whom he [?] bought this beautiful piano. The two girls died, and my father purchased the piano from Rev. Mr. Baker and made me a present of it on my fifteenth birthday. It had only been in use six years, so it was practically as good as new.

"By the way, I was married right here in this room in 1877, and I celebrated my golden wedding here, too, and my 14 father and mother observed their golden wedding anniversary here. I venture to say, from a historical point, that fact possibly cannot be duplicated in the State of Florida."

We went through the parlor down a side porch to what had been the old store-room and her father's office, the old brick flue suspended on rafters in the east room.

"Here is where my father kept the plantation supplies," said Mrs. Barnwell. "There were barrels of flour, sugar, meal, molasses and syrup, sacks of peas, beans, and food in the greatest abundance. The negro slaves would come to the porch and each received his portion, and carried it away to the family cabin down the lane of liveoaks to be cooked.

## Library of Congress

"The old kitchen, where the family good was cooked, stood about twenty foot beyond this room, and a covered way [hed?] around to the back porch on the north to the dining room.

"In the hall just outside the diningroom is a pump, which is hand operated, and brings up water from a dug well that supplied water for household purposes.

"Just west of the house is another well, dug by my father when he first came to live here in 1832. It is walled around with brick made by slaves on the plantation, and here are some more, she said, indicating some old fashioned brick - almost white, and hard as ivory - made of sand, shell and lime, molded in flat square moulds, and burned in hand-fashioned kilns over a hundred years ago, glazed with the hot fire of tough hickory logs. They form borders of the flower beds in the south garden, and platforms before the steps.

15

"The yard well is about fifteen feet deep. It is sweet water, fed by four different springs. When the tide comes in the water rises in the well, but it never becomes salty, nor has it ever overflowed the brick coping, which is six feet below the surface of the ground. The old wooden well-house is about to cave in, but I am planning to have a mechanic brick the well wall up to the surface of the ground, and build a new wellhouse. The water, as you see, is drawn up in an old iron cooking pot, one the slaves used in cooking on the fireplaces, and it is operated by a log sweep, of heavy hard wood.

"When the tide is out, you can walk along the creek bed and see the water trickling down from the four springs that feed the well."

By this time, Mrs. Barnwell was tired and she lay down to rest on the palmetto slat couch on the south porch, with its clean moss filled mattress covered with a white spread. On a table with a gay yellow spread, the daughter, Miss Lillie Barnwell, laid out the picnic lunch. There are fresh biscuits, which Mrs. Barnwell had baked early in the day and buttered while hot, sandwiches of cheese, ham and potted meat, cookies, plenty of fresh milk,

## Library of Congress

ginger ale, and coca-cola. After luncheon, the watermelon was placed on the ice for later refreshment before we started back to Jacksonville.

"I do not remember if I ever told you," said Mrs. Barnwell from her resting place on the couch, "that my great-grandfather, Henry o'Neill, was a Lieutenant in the Revolutionary War, and his father was a Major. Henry was married in Laurens, S. C., 16 to Miss Margaret Chambers, a native of Laurens. They came down here in 1775, with nine children - eight sons and one daughter, named Margaret for her mother.

"Henry o'Neill was the second son. They landed about a mile below here at what is now known as 'Bell's Grove, named for me.

"Another brother, Eber o'Neill, lived on this place. He married Mary Andrew, who was my father's mother - my grand-mother. Mary Andrew had two brothers, Uncle Robert and Uncle Thomas, both very wealthy men. Uncle Thomas Andrew dug the old well in 1832. The red brick with which it is walled, I am almost sure, were made on this place, and my father did the brick work. There were a lot of brick made out of clay, too, near [Callshan?]. But I am almost positive the red brick were made by slaves on the plantation here, and I know the white - square tile-like brick were made here.

"Henry o'Neill shortly after he come down here worked in some capacity for Spain, and as I related before, was killed by a renegade Spaniard, for which my great-grandmother was given this land grant, the pension, and the honorary letter, with the blessing of the King of Spain.

"During the War of 1812, Eber o'Neill was at the battle front, and Mary Andrew o'Neill, his wife, (my grandmother) was forced by soldiers to flee her home in the middle of the night, a half mile from here, and spend the night in the hollow of a big liveoak, with her three children my father, Aunt Mary and Aunt Jane. They stayed the next night, and the next. When they returned home, they found the house had been burned and everything stolen, and many of the negroes, 17 as well. Father put in a claim against the United

## Library of Congress

States Government, through Lawyer Burritt, of Jacksonville, and was awarded \$12,000. damages. The lawyer got half, and the balance of \$6,000 was divided equally between him and the two girls.

“Just the other day, I was looking over some old papers, and found a list of the things my father included in the claim for Mary Andrew o'Neill, it included 500 bushels of corn, a quantity of peas, beans, and other food stuffs, in addition to the house and furnishings. She was a widow, as Eber o'Neill had died several years previous to filing the claim.

“I could go to the exact spot where the old hollow oak tree was where Mary o'Neill spent three days and nights with her small family, and I have often wondered if her bravery as a woman pioneer is not worthy of a marker by some society or historical organization.

“After her home was burned, Mary came to this place to live with her brother, Thomas Andrew, who then owned it.

“My people have done good work in this country, and have always been law-abiding, upstanding people of means and education. Talk about a background! I have a double background, it includes both my mother's and father's ancestors.

“My mother's uncle was a Major in the British Army - Major Gunby. The Gunbys came down here from Georgia, when the Colonists' troops raided that section - Georgia was a part of Spanish Florida at that time.

18

THE [YULEE?] FAMILY:

“The Yulee family were our friends and neighbors. I knew them even before the War. They lived in Fernandina. During the latter part of the War, Senator David Yulee was held a prisoner on Dry Tortugas. He had been a classmate at West Point Academy with General U. S. Grant, and when Grant became President of the United States after Lincoln's

## Library of Congress

assassination, an appeal to him brought Senator Yulee's release from Jefferson Island. He was incarcerated there about six months, and the horrors he endured there, as told to our family later by Mrs. Yulee, were almost unspeakable. The family lived in Fernandina until 1875.

"On the formation of the Fernandina and Cedar Keys Railroad, Senator Yulee asked a New York capitalist, a Mr. E N Dickerson to come to Florida and accept the presidency of the small railroad. My daughter, Lille D. Barnwell, was named for one of his daughters.

"Then Mr. Yulee sold his ownership in the railroad for a supposed million dollars and moved to Washington, D. C. They had one son, Wyckliffe, named for his wife's family, Governor Wyckliffe, of Kentucky. He graduated from Washington and Lee University, at Lexington, Va. He was one of my girlhood beaux. There were three girls - Margaret, who married a Mr. Parker, Hannie, who married an Englishman, and Florida, who married a Mr. Neff. She was the youngest. By a strange trick of fate, Major General Nelson A. Miles during the war was the officer who placed Senator Yulee in prison, and later, in Washington, Senator Yulee's daughter married General Miles' son. They are all dead now.

19

"I remember one day in June (1870), after the railroad was in operation, Mrs. Yulee and the children came out on the train to o'Neill station which was about half a mile from our house, the railroad running through our land. She sent Wyckliffe up to the house, to invite us down to the station for a picnic lunch.

"The horses were harnessed to the family wagon, and we all piled in. Mrs. Yulee had brought along a big basket of lunch - fried chicken, home-made cake, pickles, bread and butter, jellies and preserves of different kinds, sweetmilk and buttermilk, pies, and other goodies. We did not know how to make sandwiches.

## Library of Congress

"We all laughed, ate and had a good time generally. Along in the afternoon, the conversation turned to Jenny Lind, the Swedish Nightingale, who was touring the United States, giving the musically inclined the benefit of her marvelous voice.

"Mrs. Yulee asked - would you like for me to sing Home, Sweet Home? It may not be as good as a Jenny Lind rendition, but I'll sing it anyway.'

"Mrs. Yuloe was a very beautiful woman - she had earned the sobriquet of 'the Wyckliffe Madonna' - and I shall never forget the beautiful picture he made as she stood in the middle of the railroad track at o'Neill Station, and her lovely voice rang out without any [accompaniament?] to the strains of the familiar song.

"As the 4 p.m. train came along, the Yulees boarded it and went back to [Fernandina?], and we returned home in the wagon. We had a grand time. It was a lovely spring day of 20 "You know there is a funny kink in my family [ancestry?]. My great-grandmother, Margaret o'Neill, married Mr. Hollingsworth, after my great-grandfather, Henry o'Neill was killed. That made her daughter, who was my/ grand mother, [?] a step-grand-mother. You see, Mary Hollingsworth, daughter by the second marriage was married to Levan Gunby, whose daughter, Susan, married my father James C. o'Neill, so she must be my step-grandmother, as well as my mother! What a mixup! By the way the o'Neills were Irish and the Gunbys were English. I found the family relationship mixup through an old deed where the Hollingsworths were making some property over to Mary Andrews o'Neill, [?] o'Neill's wife.

"Before you go, I want you to look over the old flower garden, which runs from the steps here to the fence past the old magnolia trees.

"That tree by the corner of the south porch is a bitter-sweet orange, I do not know how old it is, but it always bears a few fruit. At the other end of the porch is a sweet orange tree. At the edge of the garden are the [crepe?] myrtles - two pink flowering, and one purple. We

## Library of Congress

will have to get Dallas to try to bend over some of the slenderer limbs and get some of the lovely blossoms.

“The bed of green that covers a space of twelve feet just below the porch is a yucca [filiamentoza?] (Spanish). It was planted there nearly a hundred years ago. You see the leaves are long, spikey, on a stem like a hand. The plant blooms early in May and the blooms last for six weeks. They grow on a long stem, something like gladioli, the blooms at the end coming out first, and getting smaller and later to 21 where the flower stem branches off from the plant proper. The flowers are shaded from a deep to light pink, with deep yellow coloring near the stem. They are waxy and fragile, resembling an orchid. The plant grows from a bulb, and does not always bloom every year. The leaves are 6” to 12” long. “Here are some seeds from the date palm by the well. The dates form, but it is too cold and the warm season too short for the dates to mature.

“Under the pink crepe myrtle to the right there is a bed of flowering almond. They are perennials, having a spicy smelling yellow bloom. They, too, were planted originally fifty years age, when the new house was built.

“Over there by the old well is a [scuppernong?] grape, which I am trying to train up on the trellis. In the back are quite a vineyard of [scuppernongs?], and they bear sufficiently each year to afford some wine and jelly.”

Somebody turned the watermelon over and found it was cold, and with Miss Lillie carving it was equally divided among the party of seven, with a big slice handed to Dallas, the chauffeur, who had camped most of the day on the running board and in the front seat of the automobile, napping after lunch.

“I see the tide is coming in now, said Miss Lillie, who had dressed for the occasional trip to her old birthplace in a pair of her brother's white knickers and a middy blouse with a faded blue collar, old shoes and no stockings. Tying a brilliant green handkerchief over her red hair and grabbing the crabnet, - “Who's going crabbing?” she challenged. We

## Library of Congress

all volunteered, and trooped away to the beach a hundred yards 22 away. Even Mrs. Barnwell limped along with the others, but rested on the up-turned seat of the old baggy she used to drive to her daily duties as a country school teacher of Nassau County in the 1870's and 1880's.

We went down the steep bluff over the exposed roots of the old trees lining the bank, taking off our shoes and stockings, and wading into the warm salt water.

Dallas parked himself under a tree where he could keep a watchful eye - "to see that nobody fell in the creek" - he said, and was much perturbed when he had hardly settled down to see the marching fiddler crabs burrowing to safety before the incoming tide.

"What's [dem?] tings?" he quariied, much excited.

"Fiddler crabs," he was informed.

"I don't like dem [fiddlums?]," he mumbled, and in apprehension they might swarm over him and eat holes in his spick and span navy uniform, or chew the visor of his jaunty cap, he started with handfuls of pebbles driving them into their holes in the sand, leaving the crabbing crowd to sink or swim, as fate might [decree?].

Miss Lillie in half an hour had corralled fifteen crabs, big and little, and as it was now / seven o'clock, we reluctantly waded out to the bank, which the water was fast climbing, the bucket of crabs was turned over to Dallas, who gingerly lifted and dragged it on the end of a forked pole until he placed it in the car, jamming an old magazine down hard to keep them in the bucket on the trip back to Jacksonville.

23

The full moon shown through the trees, forming weird pictures in the shadows of the big oaks with their covering of moss, as we went down the Avenue to the main road through the old plantation.

## Library of Congress

The empty milk bottles and the soft drink bottled were returned to Mrs. Zetterower at the filling station, who inquired with the kindly friendliness of a neighbor if we had all had a good time, and invited us to stop again any time we passed their place on Florida 13.

"I am so happy," said Mrs. Barnwell, as she settled back for the ride home. "It is the first time I have been over for six months, and when I broke my ankle early this spring, I feared I might never be able to make the trip again." I am so thankful - God has always been so good to me."

We all felt thankful, too, and appreciative of her cordial invitation which had given us such a memorable day at Neuva Esperanza.

At the highway bridge over Lanceford Creek, or Clark's River, its new name, Mrs. Barnwell said: "It was in the swamps along this creek where my son, Woodward, used to catch the big, [thin-winged?] swamp flies. Sometimes they would get away and fly high in the air and disappear, and he would say - " " Mother, some day I'm going to fly like that." "

Woodward Barnwell was an aviator in the World War, and afterwards an instructor in the government aviation school. He was killed in a glider accident, with a student-pupil at the controls, on Fernandina Beach in February, 1937.